

## People's Assembly for Nature Weekend 2 Overview

### Saturday Morning

**Topic: How we use our land, rivers and seas, what frameworks are in place to protect nature and why have these not worked?**

- General welcome to the online assembly.
- A recap for assembly members about the first assembly weekend from Pete Smith.
- **Professor Nathalie Seddon, University of Oxford and Academic Lead**, welcomes assembly members back, recaps what was covered in Weekend 1 and gives an overview of UK land, freshwater and sea.

- **Richard Benwell, Wildlife and Countryside Link: 'UK habitats, species, and the protection mechanisms currently in place'**

This talk introduces UK habitats, species and associated processes and gives a summary of current protections in place, including through protected areas, planning systems, legislation, and why these are in place.

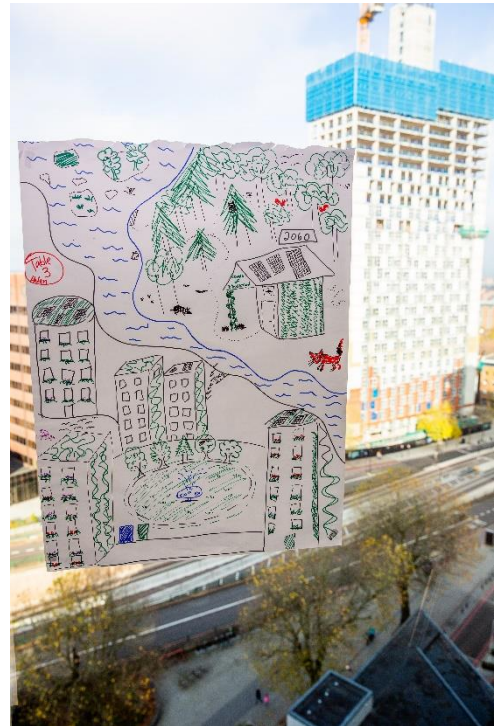
- **Nadia Shaikh, Freelance Nature Consultant: 'Why are current protections not delivering for nature?'**

This talk explores why, whilst there are some examples of effective nature protection, the overall picture is that these have not succeeded in stopping the decline.

- **Group discussions:**

- What information struck you from those talks that seems important to return to and/or explore further?
- Did you hear anything that surprised you?
- Before joining this session, what did you know, if anything, about protected areas and protections for nature in the UK? Have you ever visited one? Have you seen them on programmes? Where is the nearest one to where you live?

- Break



- **Group discussions – making sense of what we heard. Prompts:**
  - What stands out as important from each presentation?
  - What seems central to our understanding of the current situation and the challenges relating to it?
  - What do you consider to be the key role of these mechanisms for protecting and conserving nature?
  - What would you expect to see if protections were effective? i.e. what would good look like?
  - Agree in your group the 2 – 3 big key issues/barriers relating to the current approach to putting mechanisms in place to protect and conserve nature - *What is holding this back?*
  - If time, consider which of the actors play a role here, and why they may be blocked from effective action?

## Saturday Afternoon

### Topic: How Protections can work?

Having heard about why existing protections have not brought about sufficient nature protection overall, assembly members will hear about some examples where they *have* been effective. Importantly, these presentations will discuss the enabling factors and the barriers to success, so that assembly members can consider how these might be used in making protections more effective.

- **Sara McGuckin, Chief Scientific Officer of NI Environment Agency: ‘How have legal protections on an internationally important site resulted in a good outcome for nature?’** discusses this topic through a case study of Ballynahone Bog.
- **Tom Tew, Nature Space: ‘How planning can help, focussing at a local authority level’** This talk looked at great crested newt district level licensing schemes and where they have resulted in a good outcome for nature.
- **COAST, Community of Arran Seabed Trust: ‘Scotland’s No Take Zone inspires at EU Life Platform Meeting’.** Assembly members watch a short film which demonstrates an effective nature protection scheme led by the local community.
- **Sam Beaumont, Gowbarrow Hall Farm: ‘Farming within a protected landscape’** This talk focusses on the enabling factors and challenges of farming within a protected landscape.
- **Facilitated small group discussions:**
  - What information struck you from those talks that seems important to return to and/or explore further?
  - Did you hear anything that surprised you?
- Break
- **Group discussions - Identifying potential areas of focus for ‘Calls to Action’ relating to protected areas:**
  - What insights are emerging about what works with regards to protections?
  - What are the common/effective ways of approaching barriers/difficulties?
  - What should we be really paying attention to when trying to protect/restore nature?
- **Wrap-up**



## Sunday Morning

### Topic: Disconnect From Nature- Reconnecting With Nature

Assembly members explored how a disconnection from nature - from the individual to the structural level - is a driver of the biodiversity crisis. The assembly learned about how this impacts different parts of society and heard about some of the reasons for disconnection, particularly noting continued urbanisation. In addition, there were examples of where connections have been re-built, the associated benefits of these, and how these examples might be taken to expand better access to nature for all

- **Professor Miles Richardson: 'The role of nature connection and improving it to unite both human and nature's wellbeing'**

This talk discusses nature disconnection, its effects, how these vary across communities/ age groups and the impacts this has on structural level decision making.

- **Maxwell Ayamba, Sheffield Environmental Movement: 'Access to nature and how this varies across different communities'**

This talk discusses how access to nature varies across different communities, not only within cities, but also in the countryside.

Implications of inequality of access to nature, examples of outcomes when nature access has been improved and how this can be better supported/facilitated.

- **Gillian Dick, Glasgow City Council: 'Active urban greening projects'**

This talk discusses examples of active urban greening projects and retrofitting water quality improvements in towns/cities. It explores what the multiple benefits are, as well as the challenges and enabling factors in delivering these.

- **Nigel Symes, RSPB: 'New housing developments and building in biodiversity-friendly measures'**

This talk uses the example of Barratt Homes Kingsbrook development to demonstrate how new housing can be built with nature in mind. It covers both the challenges and enabling factors.

- **Kat Deeney, Plymouth City Council: 'How could decision making be done differently if those round the table were connected to – and accounted for – nature?'**

This talk introduces the concept of Natural Capital and how Plymouth City Council has applied this to give nature a seat at the decision making table.

- Break out into small group discussions

- 10 minute break

- **Group discussions: Identifying potential areas of focus for 'Calls to Action' relating to nature disconnection and reconnection:**

- What stands out as important from each presentation?
- What was said that is central to our understanding of the current situation and the challenges relating to it?
- What are the consequences of people being disconnected from nature?
- What are the consequences of decision makers being disconnected from nature?
- What are the main elements of reconnecting with nature?
- What can help ensure that nature is accessible to all?
- What does it mean to give nature a seat at the decision making table?

- Break up for lunch



## Sunday Afternoon

### Topic: Restoring Nature

This session moved beyond protection to consider restoration - how might we consider restoring nature where it has been lost? Assembly members heard about nature restoration as a concept and some of the challenges and trade-offs to consider in implementing this. They heard about initiatives to restore nature at a range of scales (including how these have been enabled, or not, by our existing way of doing things), what can be learned from these examples, and to consider what might enable more nature restoration.

- **Professor Rosemary Hails, Nature and Science Director, National Trust: 'What do we mean by restoration?'**  
This talk provides an overview on the concept of restoration, why it's important and how/where it can be successful in the UK today, including species reintroduction.
- **Philip Price, Seawilding: 'Community-led restoration initiatives'**  
This talk explores Seawilding, the UK's first community-led native oyster and seagrass restoration project. It explains both the enabling factors that supported the project's development and the challenges that had to be overcome.
- **James Rainey, Senior Ecologist at Trees for Life: 'Rewilding the Scottish Highlands'**  
This talk discusses an ambitious project under way in the Scottish Highlands, which focusses on 'process-led' rewilding. Covering the successes, along with the enablers and barriers that have been met along the way.
- **Tim Ferrero, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust: 'Wilder Solent'**  
This talk gives an overview of an ambitious restoration programme and multi-agency partnership being developed across The Solent; a highly populated area of the south coast of England that includes agricultural land, freshwater and coastal habitats. It looks at the multiple benefits for nature and climate of this kind of project, but also the challenges and barriers.
- **Small group discussions**
- **15 minute break**
- **Group discussions – making sense of what we have heard.**
  - What stands out as important from each presentation?
  - What was said that is central to our understanding of the current situation and the challenges relating to it?
  - What are the main difficulties and challenges in making successful restoration happen?
  - Why does it seem difficult to do more of it? Where are the issues and challenges? How do these vary in urban vs rural examples?
  - What seem to be important elements of successful restoration of nature?
  - Where can restoration play an effective role?
- **Conclusions presented from across the four sessions**
- **Wrap-up and end of Weekend 2**

